

February 14, 2014

Good morning Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, Senator Fasano, Representative Camillo and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Jim Gildea and I consider it a privilege to be appointed to the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council by Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

I would like to thank this committee for the opportunity to appear before you to speak about my desire to serve as a member of the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council. I have been serving on both the current Council and the previous Council since my appointment by the Governor in 2012. I was also recently elected Vice Chair of the Council this past January.

I would like to tell you a little about myself. I married my high school sweetheart, Tracy and together we have 7 beautiful children. I love my big family and value my role as a father the most and I have rarely missed a doctor's appointment, school play or sporting event. I moved to Derby when I was 7 years old and I have never left. I love my city and the roots I have formed there and I have valued the contributions that I have attempted to make.

I am presently the Plant Manager at Bigelow Tea, located in Fairfield. I am proud to work at this Connecticut based company as we are the number one seller of specialty tea in America. In this role, I oversee the entire manufacturing operations including our security and greening initiatives. I have been at Bigelow for 18 years. From a community service perspective, I believe strongly in giving back to one's community and working to leave this world a better place than how we found it. In that regard, I have volunteered in many capacities in the City where I live and call home. I have been active in my city having served on the Zoning Commission, Board of Education (where I was chairman for 12 of the 14 years I served), Library and School Building committees and I am currently a member of the Derby Water Pollution Control Authority. This past year, I was once again elected to the Board of Education. I am also a member of the Board of Directors for the Leadership for Greater Bridgeport and I teach 2nd grade religion at Holy Rosary Church in Ansonia.

I am interested in serving on the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council as I am a daily commuter, traveling on both the Waterbury branch line and the New Haven main line. I believe this gives me a unique perspective as I use two different lines daily. At a time when commuter satisfaction is not at its highest level, it is important that the voice of the average daily commuter be represented on the Council. I believe that the Council serves a useful purpose and in my opinion, it is to engage and advocate for the commuters who use the various rail lines. We should do so by working with representatives from the Department of Transportation, Metro North and the State Legislature.

Although we have a number of branch lines that allow service throughout the State of Connecticut, there is still much more of the State that we can provide service to. That being said, even with the branch lines that we do have, there are not enough or consistent commuter friendly service times that make the lines all that attractive to take. As we look to ensure our State is competitive in attracting and retaining both businesses and also tax paying and revenue generating commuters, it is vital that we can efficiently and economically get commuters to and from their place of employment or other destinations. In addition, getting more cars off the roads and interstates helps reduce emissions which is good for the environment and reduces congestion which helps reduce accidents and is good from a health, wellness and safety perspective.

In closing, I feel I have both the credentials to serve along with the dedication and desire. I will do my best to serve and be both positive and productive. I appreciate your consideration in allowing me the chance to serve on the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council

Thank you.

Jim Gildea